

PRESS RELEASE

Congressman John Conyers, Jr.

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Ranking Member, Committee on the Judiciary
Dean, Congressional Black Caucus**

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CONYERS CALLS FOR AN FTC INVESTIGATION INTO THE MARKETING OF SNIPER RIFLES

Congressman John Conyers Jr., Ranking Member of the House Judiciary Committee issued the following statement at a press conference today calling for an FTC investigation into the marketing of sniper rifles to civilians:

“The DC Metropolitan area has been hit by a tragic flurry of gun violence. Nine innocent people have been killed or injured by a serial killer who is using the technology of sniper rifles.

Many have asked why there is such a silence from Congress. For some, it is a losing political issue that should be kept on the backburner until after the November elections.

I am here today to solicit the FTC’s help in bringing an end to a practice that has become far too common in our communities, the mass marketing of military style rifles to civilians. There is no legitimate purpose for a military rifle than to make war. There is no reason these rifles should be marketed to civilians.

A study of gun industry advertising and promotional literature documents how a few “bad apples” in the gun industry are developing and marketing military sniper rifles to civilians. Some of these ads focus on the ability of such weapons to shoot down airplanes and helicopters, and shoot through armored personnel vehicles.

Now, I use the phrase “a few bad apples” to avoid casting an industry-wide indictment of those in the gun industry. As with any other profession, there are good actors and irresponsible and bad actors out to make a quick buck. Today, we are here to discuss the bad actors.

Sniper weapons pose a real danger to the civilian population. They are radically different from standard hunting rifles. These weapons are designed for the specific purpose of firing on a target from a significant distance. Their accuracy and range capabilities make these weapons among the most dangerous available today. They can hit targets accurately one mile away and can inflict damage to targets up to four miles away. They are incredible precise and ruthlessly deadly.

In light of the recent shootings in Maryland, and the others in the DC metropolitan area, I hope that we can count on the FTC to play a role in bringing an end to such undesirable practices.”